

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Final Meeting Minutes

1 **Date:** November 18, 2021
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference

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 5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Marian Levy Wilson	P	At-Large
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large	<i>Megan Barber</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Alexis Zaharis Grimm	P	Lodging	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	<i>Henry Granison</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Connie Kan	P	At-Large	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>IEAD, Non-Voting</i>
Wendy Kobler	E	Ithaca College	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Rick Manning	P	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Todd Parlato	E	At-Large	<i>Chuck Tauck</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	Nick Helmholdt	<i>P</i>	Tourism Program Director
Deb Mohlenhoff	P	TC3	Kristin McCarthy	P	TCDPS

7 **Guests:** Patty Poist

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 9 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill called meeting to order at
 10 3:03pm. No changes to the agenda.

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 12 **Action: Approval of October 2021 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft October meeting minutes
 13 were approved as submitted (motion by Monika Roth, seconded by Greg Mezey).

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 15 **Privilege of the Floor** – None

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 17 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

18 Kelli provided updates on recruitment for the Diversity and Inclusion Committee as well as the
 19 activities of the Tourism Recovery Committee, which continues to work on a winter campaign.

20
 21 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

22 Nick welcomed Marian Levy Wilson (At-Large) and Chuck Tauck (Associate) to the STPB, and they
 23 both spoke for a few moments about their professional and personal backgrounds, expertise they
 24 bring to the board, and connection to Tompkins County. He also reported on state funding for
 25 tourism and reminded members to complete annual NYS Sexual Harassment Prevention Training,
 26 before sharing a presentation he gave to the Housing and Economic Development legislative
 27 committee on short term rentals (STR). Q&A discussion covered various topics, including room tax

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28 compliance, average occupancy and rates, geographic distribution, municipal regulations, state-
29 level mandates, outreach and education to STR owners and operators, model communities to
30 emulate, and data collection.

31

32 **Action: Reappointment Members to STPB – Doug Levine, Membership/Bylaws Committee**

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34 Doug Levine, on behalf of the Membership & Bylaws Committee, requested that the board
35 reappoint members up for renewal in 2022.

36

37 **Action:** Doug Levine made a motion, which Brett Bossard seconded, to recommend Doug Levine,
38 Wendy Kobler, Laura Winter Falk, Ken Jupiter, and Rick Manning for reappointment to the
39 Strategic Tourism Planning Board. Motion carried by members present.

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41 **Action: Nominating and Electing 2022 Officers – Monika Roth, Nominating Committee**

42 Monika Roth, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, presented the 2022 slate of officers for
43 consideration. Nominations were solicited from the floor but none were offered.

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45 **Action:** Monika Roth made a motion, which Josh Friedman seconded, to appoint Brett Bossard as
46 2022 Chair and Doug as 2022 Vice Chair of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board. Motion carried
47 by members present, with Doug Levine and Brett Bossard abstaining.

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49 **Budget Committee: – Josh Friedman**

50 Josh gave an update to the group on the work of the Budget Committee. First, he reported on a
51 proposed budget adjustment for 2022 to shift funding for the County Historian, which the County
52 Legislature is moving to another budget line, to the CVB. Nick will bring it forward to Housing and
53 Economic Development Committee in 2022 as a budget adjustment.

54

55 **Action:** Josh Friedman made a motion, which Laura Winter Falk seconded, to recommend that
56 \$7,500 in funding for the County Historian be reallocated to support the Ithaca Tompkins County
57 Convention and Visitors Bureau. Motion carried by members present.

58

59 He next reported on the draft budget reserve and surplus policy, which proposes possibly
60 increasing the reserve from 5% to 10%, as room tax dollars are coming in higher than projected.
61 The surplus for 2022 is projected to be somewhere in the range of \$500-700K. Josh's update and
62 the subsequent discussion took a deep dive into strategic thinking about what to do with the
63 surplus, with committee contemplating a recommendation to apply it toward wayfinding
64 initiatives and relaunching the Strategic Tourism initiative (STI) grant program, which currently is
65 not included in the proposed 2022 budget. The Q&A discussion was lively and touched on a variety
66 of topics, including STI grant guidelines, digital versus physical signage, public parking and other
67 tourism infrastructure concerns, Visitor Profile Study, limitations on broadband and mobile phone
68 service throughout county and impact on visitor experience, budget constraints, and funding
69 commitments from other stakeholders such as City of Ithaca.

70

71 **Update: Outdoor Recreation Committee and Tompkins Outdoors Grant – Rick Manning**

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72 Rick Manning reported to the group on the activities of the Outdoor Recreation Committee,
73 specifically its efforts to finalize grant guidelines for the new Tompkins Outdoors grant program,
74 which will launch in early 2022. Rick thanked Nick and the committee for their efforts and
75 provided background context on the Tompkins Outdoors grant, the idea for which grew out of the
76 foundation set in the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Tourism Plan. This grant will provide operational
77 support and help build capacity through funds for staffing or specific projects, with maximum
78 award set at \$15,000 or 10% of budget and minimum award of \$1,500. (It was specified that the
79 Planning & Evaluation Committee had made three changes to version of grant guidelines included
80 in the agenda packet.) Applicants will complete an eligibility questionnaire and then full
81 application if selected to continue. Rick asked the board to approve the grant guidelines.

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83 **Action:** Rick Manning made a motion, which Laura Winter Falk seconded, to approve the grant
84 guidelines for the Tompkins Outdoors grant program. Motion carried by members present.

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86 **Member Announcements** – Members shared news about events and other items of potential
87 interest to the group.

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89 **Adjournment** – Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 4:30pm.

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